

Almost Half of U.S. Dairy Farms Now Registered in NAIS

Almost half of the nation's dairy farms are now registered in the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), and executives at the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) are hopeful that the majority of the remaining producers will agree to participate by the middle of next year.

"We estimate that about 30,000 of the 65,000 commercial dairy farms and dairy calf producers have now registered their premises," says Jamie Jonker, director of regulatory affairs at NMPF. "Our goal is to get the remaining dairy farms registered by the end of next June."

Last March, delegates to DFA's 2007 Annual Meeting passed a resolution supporting the NAIS process. DFA programs, including mySecurity and the Gold Standard Dairy program, also encourage DFA members to register their premises.

"We all recognize that the appearance of a foreign animal disease like foot and mouth disease would be crippling to the dairy industry," says Charles Beckendorf, a DFA Board member and dairy producer from Tomball, Texas, and NMPF chairman.

"Knowing where livestock operations are is the first step to containing the spread of such a catastrophic disease in the first 48 hours," Beckendorf continues. "Because if we cannot track it and contain it at that point, milk marketing – and the movement of feed, animals and manure – would grind to a halt, paralyzing our industry. NAIS is an important part of our dairy industry's national insurance policy against animal disease outbreaks."



While some states have now made farm premises registration mandatory, Jonker says it's important producers understand that participation in NAIS is voluntary at the federal level. He adds that producers should know that proprietary data they provide about their farm will be kept private, and will not be under government control.

To learn more about the NAIS, visit www.idairy.org. ★